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Suspense: 30 January 1987

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Central Intelligence Agency 87-0276
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Executive Director

20 January 1987

NOTE FOR: Bill Donnelly
Ed Maloney

These are pages from a recent IG inspection report of LA Division...making the point quite well, I think, of the desirability of bringing together our computing and word processing worlds. Have we heard anything new from Wang pointing to real progress to enable us to connect Wangs to our mainframes via AIM?



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ALLSTAR-UPGRADE

In mid-1985 LA agreed to be the testbed for the new ALLSTAR-Upgrade in the DO. Both IMS and LA Division benefit from this agreement; LA received new Delta Data terminals without having to pay for them and IMS had a component that was willing to test out the system under normal operating conditions, was able to identify deficiencies or problems, and work with IMS to implement any improvements.

The system employs existing software tailored for the DI but not always appropriate for DO applications. It also has a word processing capability, but one that was developed in CIA "by programmers for programmers" which was described as not as good as the WP capability provided by the WANG system which many in CIA have used, are familiar with, and are loathe to give up. Utilization and acceptance of the new system within LA has been far from universal and we heard a number of complaints about IMS being unresponsive to LA requirements.

LA people claim the system does not do what they need, that it is cumbersome to learn, and that IMS will not make the needed changes to the software. Furthermore, they say that is

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the reason for so many terminals going unused. IMS counters that LA is a testbed and any proposed changes need to be analyzed to determine the effects they will have on the rest of the program if implemented. In many cases a change simply cannot be accommodated because the system has to remain compatible with connected systems or employ applications precluding the change. What may be happening here is that LA users may not understand system constraints and see the problems stemming from an unresponsive IMS. ju

Even though IMS may not be communicating sufficiently with the users to explain the constraints, it at least has made several attempts to do so. One was the institution of a "Feedback Folder" wherein anyone who wished to provide feedback to IMS concerning system deficiencies could insert them in this folder which would be read and acted upon by IMS. The second was a proposal for the formulation of an LA Users Group comprised of representatives from various LA branches and staffs who would discuss problems associated with the system and present these problems to IMS at the meetings. Neither of these two proposals was accepted by LA personnel. The proposal for a Users Group makes good sense to us and we suggest that C/LA and C/IMS ensure that such a group is established. Clearly, members should be people who are committed to making the system work and not just chronic complainers.

We noted that some of the senior managers in LA are not users of automation systems and a few not only do not use them but advertise that they are opposed to their use. It was pointed out to us that, for a few very senior officers, it may not be necessary or practical for them to have a terminal. They are not in the production mode per se, they rarely originate correspondence themselves, and much of the editing or coordinating is done at a lower level. Also, they are not normally accessing data bases.

We accept their position as long as they take a "do as I say and not as I do" approach and explain the reasons to their

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employees. In short, it is necessary for LA management to encourage the use of automation and not let each branch or section chief decide unilaterally whether or not to use it depending on personal likes or dislikes.

We saw several examples of new training documents and user aids being developed in IMS. We were impressed with the content and presentation and would encourage LA to obtain copies of these documents and provide the widest dissemination within the Division. They are especially helpful for users who cannot or will not attend training classes, something IMS says happens fairly frequently, especially at the senior levels.

The documents are written in such a way that they can easily be followed for basic system operation and to extricate the user from the most common pitfalls in terminal operation. There is also an excellent publication written by IMS entitled "ALLSTAR" which describes the ALLSTAR-Upgrade system in layman's terms and which LA officers may find informative and useful.

As noted elsewhere, we heard various complaints about the lack of personnel support in the Division and we attempted to determine the reasons for some of the tardy responses to field cables. We learned that, as with some other elements in the Division, personnel officers used a mix of Delta Data terminals and WANG terminals. There was little if any cross-training on the two systems. If a personnel officer using one system was absent, work might go undone because another officer might not be able to access the necessary data to respond unless also trained on the same system. We suggest LA/Personnel decide which system it will use to manage personnel data in the Division and convert entirely to that system as soon as possible. In addition, it is essential that IMS press on with its development of the requested LA personnel tracking system software which should help to alleviate some of LA's personnel management problems.

A side issue on the discussion of automation within LA is the growing number of requests for automation support being

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